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Lord's Supper

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FOR THE

Holy Sacrament:

BEING

An Attempt to Reſcue it from ſome Late Prophanations in CIVIL MATTERS.

In a LETTER to a Member of Parliament. By a LAY-HAND.

Licenſed, March 25, 1689. *JAMES FRASER.*

SIR, *March* 20th, 168$\frac{8}{9}$.

IT hath been one of the moſt ſucceſsful Stratagems of the Apoſtate Prince of Darkneſs, to Ruin Mens Souls by thoſe very means which were ordained for their Salvation; and this Policy of his appears in no Inſtance more evident, than in the Methods he has taken to make the Euchariſt a means of Deſtruction; while by unworthily Receiving, Men *eat and drink damnation to themſelves.* * * 1 Cor. 11. 29.

Hence his faithful Servants, the Authors of that Myſtery of Iniquity, Popery, have made Tranſubſtantiation a Teſt of their Catholiſm, burning and damning Men for being Men; that is, for uſing their Sence and Reaſon: With one hand robbing us of the Holy Sacrament, and its proper Uſes; and with the other, preſenting us with a piece of Pageantry, and requiring our Adoration of a ſenſeleſs Idol.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was Inſtituted by our Bleſſed Saviour, in Remembrance of himſelf, and as a bond of Union among his Followers. 'Tis the peculiar Right of ſuch who by ſound Faith, well digeſted Knowledge, and ſome Experience of the Comforts and Pleaſures that Reſult from a Good Conſcience, and Holy Converſation,

 are

are made to long for further Degrees of Conformity to the Will of God, clearer Manifeſtations of the Divine Love, and more evident Signs of the Soul's Recovery from its fallen ſtate.

The Motives to come to it ought to be from within, or elſe from above, and not from beneath; and the Things to be obtained by it, ought to be increaſe of ſpiritual Bleſſings, and not of outward Emoluments.

Bleſſed is that Nation where the Government can find men otherwiſe fitted for Publick Employments, whoſe uſe of this Sacrament appears by their Converſations, to proceed from ſuch Principles; and ſurely he * 1 Rev. 5. who loves the Commemoration of the * Prince of the Kings of the Earth, in this way of his own Inſtitution, has an excellent Qualification to Recommend him to thoſe Vicegerents of that Prince, who deſire and deſign to promote his Intereſt.

But Sir, to give a plain Anſwer to your Queſtion, I am of Opinion,

That it is at leaſt inconvenient, to impoſe the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper on every Man that executes an Office in Publick Adminiſtrations; and that among others, for theſe Reaſons:

1. The Ordinance was Inſtituted to other Ends; and I know not when the Warrant was ſigned by our Saviour, to uſe it to ſuch a purpoſe—'Tis his Great Seal, and ought not to be put to any Commiſſions but his own.

2. No Man who is fit for it, needs a Law to bring him to it; all the † 2 Pſ. 110. Souldiers of the † Captain of our Salvation are ‖ Voluntiers; and on the ‖ 110 Pſ. 3. contrary 'tis certain, that he that needs a Law to bring him to it, is not fit for it.

3. If this Teſt be eſtabliſht, 'tis the Duty of all Men in their reſpective Places to keep from Offices all that are guilty of Swearing, Drinking, Whoring, and the other parts of a prophane Life, which are obvious to common obſervation; for thoſe things evidently unfit Men to receive the Sacrament: And if the Government ſhould permit no Man to be in any Office that drinks to exceſs, or miſpends his time in tipling, that uſes to ſwear in common diſcourſe, or whoſe Life otherwiſe appears vitious, what multitudes of places would be empty, which are now well filled for the Publick Intereſt? And yet what a Cruelty would it be to any vitious Man, to put him under a neceſſity of Prophaning the Sacrament, by putting him into Office—For it is moſt certain, that not only every Man that lives in the Practice of any known Vice, but every Man that lives not in a daily endeavour to perform his Covenant made in Baptiſm with the moſt Bleſſed Trinity, ought to keep far from the Sacred Table.

4. I know it is objected, that all Men ought to be fit for the Sacrament, and that it will tend much to promote a Good Life, that they be under a neceſſity to receive it—But let Experience ſpeak—Mens Stomachs have ſcarce yet digeſted the Sacraments, which they have prophaned, for ſome

Years

Years paſt, to keep their Places—*Men* have taken the Sacrament, and betrayed their Country, and ruined their honeſt Neighbours, taken the Sacrament, and introduc'd Popery; taken the Sacrament, and murdered Men by colour of Law; and who is there (of a Subject) among the Authors of the Grievances of the Nation, that took not the Sacrament to enable him ſo to be? Not to mention Perſons of better Rank, how many Vintners, Ale-Houſe-keepers, and others of like Profeſſion, have purchaſed their Licenſes at the hazard of their Souls? And I dare appeal to all Men, to whom theſe Preſents ſhall come, whether within their knowledge any Reformation hath been wrought thereby. Five hundred have refuſed it for Conſcience-ſake for one profane Perſon that has ſcrupled it. And who, and where is he whoſe Life hath been Reformed by being under this neceſſity?--- But if the univerſal depravity of Mens Manners be compared with the univerſal attendance that was paid of late at the Communion-Table, what a dreadful Proſpect is preſented thereby to any conſidering Mind? If of the *Corinthians*, who Received unworthily, *many were* * *ſick and weak, and ſome were puniſhed with death*, what Deſolations would Divine Vengeance make in *England*, ſhould the ſame Meaſure be meted out to us. But, * 1 Cor. 11. 30.

5. *The Kingdom of our Lord* * *Chriſt is not of this world*, at leaſt not before *the time of the* * *Reſtitution of all things*: And although the good Chriſtian muſt neceſſarily be a good Subject, yet a Man whoſe fitneſs to receive the Sacrament is known to God his own Conſcience, and to all good Men, may be very unfit for an Office in the State; and he may be exceeding fit for a Publick Employment, whoſe unfitneſs to receive the Sacrament is as obvious. It is an Opinion in this ſenſe juſtly exploded, That Dominion is founded in Grace; for God has *given the* * *Earth to thoſe Children of men whom he deſigns not for Heaven*. And *thoſe* * *Children of this world, who are wiſer in their Generation than the Children of Light*, are, by reaſon of that Wiſdom, fit to be employed therein. But, * John 18. 36. * Acts 3. 21. * Pſal. 115. 16. * Luke 16. 8.

6. The Generations to come ſhall call them Bleſſed, who inſtead of forcing Men to the Sacrament, uſe all means Divinely inſtituted, to make them fit for it.—The Primitive Biſhops kept Men *Catechumens* for a long time, and admitted none to the Sacrament, till they were approved and practical Chriſtians. And if the Inhabitants, and eſpecially the Children of *England*, were every where made *Catechumens* by Publick Authority, the next Generation may probably fill all Publick Employments with Men, who would approach the Sacrament both to the Publick Advantage and their own; for the appearances of Divine Providence in the World are now conſpicuous, and at all times, (but eſpecially in thoſe days wherein God is pleaſed more eminently to take to himſelf his * great Power and Reign) Good Men are Publick Bleſſings. Ten * Righteous had ſaved *Sodom* that ſuch a day *La-* * Rev. 1. 17. * Gen. 18. 32.

ban's * Flock increas'd under *Jacob's*, and * *Potiphar's* Affairs were bleſt under *Joſeph's* Care; but till the Manners of Men be greatly altered, nothing ſhould be avoided more carefully for the Publick Intereſt than ill Mens coming to the Sacrament, leſt not only the Perſons of Men, but the Publick ſhould ſuffer under the Divine Diſpleaſure. * One *Jonah* may endanger a Ship; and * one Righteous *Lot* may ſecure a Town.

* Gen. 30. 27.
* Gen. 39. 3.
* Jonah 1. 12.
* Gen. 19. 21.

7. I muſt confeſs it is difficult to me to find out any plauſible Reaſon for this Device; ſure it is not worth a while to make ſuch a Teſt to ſecure a diſputable Poſture, or to tempt all Hypocrites into the Church; for 'tis ten to one that he that comes to the Sacrament becauſe he cannot have an Employment without it, is an Hypocrite; and it is as many to one, but the Proteſtant that loſes an Office, becauſe he cannot receive the Sacrament, is an honeſt Man, is a true and uſeful Subject.

8. It cannot be an equivalent to the aforeſaid Dangers that hereby ſome Papiſts may be kept from Employment, for he is greatly miſtaken that believes the Sacrament to be the ſtrength of the Teſt; Tranſubſtantiation is the thing which the Papiſt cannot renounce; for Men are fond of Gods of their own making, but he may well Communicate with the Church, as by the Examples of the late King *Charles* the Second, *Obadiah Walker*, and others, is plainly evinc'd; and the Reaſon is as plain as the Fact, for he either believes that we have no Goſpel-Prieſts, and takes the Bread and the Wine as common Food: Or if he allows our Prieſts power to Conſecrate, he may adore the Bread very conveniently upon his knees.

9. Beſides Papiſts in Diſguiſe are no ways dreadful when they have no Protection or favour from Court. They have been happily diſcovered in the ſhort time of Father *Petre's* Miniſtry, and muſt never expect to live unknown or unhated in *England* any more. So that now upon the whole matter, the Sum of what I have offered is this.

That to make the Sacrament a Teſt for Civil Offices, is unſuitable to the Inſtitution, Nature, and Ends of the Sacrament, dangerous to the Government, and to the Souls of Men, grounded on no ſolid Reaſon, of uſe only to exclude good Subjects, and wholly inſufficient to promote the true Intereſt of *England*, which is by all means conſiſtent with Reaſon and Juſtice, to promote Union among Proteſtants, and to exclude Popery for ever.

I am ſenſible that I have not impoveriſh'd this Subject, the bounds of a Letter allows me only to hint at things, but if you pleaſe to object in your Anſwer againſt the Arguments here advanc'd, you will oblige me, for I am a hearty lover of the Bleſſed Sacrament, a well-wiſher to England, *eaſily and willingly vanquiſh'd by Reaſon, a Zealous ſeeker of Truth, an Expecter as well as Deſirer of Peace among all true Chriſtians, and* Your Humble Servant.

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